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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 015769

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE: ISLAMIST AND EXTREMIST

GROUPS ENGAGE IN RELIEF EFFORT

REF: A. (A) ISLAMABAD 15736

[B](#). (B) ISLAMABAD 15463

Classified By: Derived from DSCG 05-01, d

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Islamist parties, clergy, and militant/extremist groups are using the Kashmir earthquake to strengthen their public image in affected areas...and to raise money. Member parties of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) are engaged in independent relief efforts through their charitable foundations. Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD), the parent organization of designated FTO Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LT) and most visible extremist group currently involved in relief operations, has already received favorable media coverage. In keeping with its long-standing practice, JUD will likely funnel a portion of charitable contributions for earthquake relief to support militant operations. A number of Muslim charities are also engaged in relief efforts, most prominently Islamic Relief, which while not yet designated as a specially designated national and blocked person has been monitored by the USG for some time. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (S) The Islamist parties comprising the MMA are engaged in fundraising for earthquake relief through their charitable foundations. Most prominent MMA leaders have already traveled to the earthquake zone for well-publicized tours. Al-Khidmat, the Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) charitable arm, is most prominent in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK), while it shares the stage in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) with Al-Khair, Jamiate Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rehman's (JUI-F) charitable wing. JI officials privately claimed to have raised nearly \$5 million for relief. (Note: Post believes this figure is exaggerated.) Both have established clinics and distribution points for blankets, food, water, and over-the-counter medicine. JI and JUI-F have used their charitable arms to raise funds for terrorist/militant organizations in the past. JUI-F seems to have severed its financial relations with such organizations, although the JI link with the FTO Hizbul Mujahideen may still exist and a portion of funds may be diverted there. Officials from Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP) and Tehrike Islami Pakistan (TIP) admitted that their parties' relief efforts have been miniscule, but claimed that they were a necessary and effective public relations tool.

[1](#)3. (S) JUD is the most visible militant group engaged in relief operations, although we understand that Jaish-i-Muhammad, Harakat-ul-Mujahadeen, Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islam, and Hizbul Mujahideen have all launched smaller efforts. Sectarian extremist groups Sipah-i-Mohammad, Sipah-i-Sahaba, and Sunni Tehrike are also carrying out relief work. Only JUD and Sunni Tehrike are overtly fundraising, as others are officially "banned" organizations. Regardless of their "banned" status, post suspected that these groups still raise funds through affiliated and sympathetic mosques, madrassas, and clergy, who routinely collect "charitable" donations during this Ramadan season. JUD, like most Pakistani militant and sectarian organizations, has a long history of channeling a portion of all donations to their militant arms; post believes it will continue to do so.

[1](#)4. (S) JUD relief efforts have been prominently and positively highlighted in the local media. Articles have praised JUD's working alongside the USG in distributing assistance, despite the USG's desire to have JUD declared a terrorist organization. While the GOP has professed a desire to close JUD relief operations, no action has yet been taken.

[1](#)5. (S) Several Kashmiri militant/terrorist and sectarian extremist organizations are raising funds overseas, either directly or through supportive clerics, particularly in the Persian Gulf, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Singapore. This revenue flow increases during Ramadan, as clergy seek zakat to support "charitable" efforts in Pakistan. Pakistani clergy fundraise among Islamic communities in Europe and the United States; however, increasingly stringent visa requirements have limited the ability of supporters of extremist/militant/terrorist organizations to travel to these countries. International Islamic charities are, of course, raising funds for the victims of the earthquake disaster worldwide. Islamic Relief, in particular, has gained post's

attention for its relatively aggressive posturing, including having its website listed on CNN and BBC as a possible contact for charitable donations. (Note: As Washington is aware, although Islamic Relief is not on Treasury's sanction list, it has been investigated and monitored by various USG agencies for some time. End note.)

16. (S) Comment: The GOP faces a serious dilemma dealing with the proliferation of fundraising and relief efforts by militant/terrorist/extremist organizations, which President Musharraf has publicly promised to close as part of his crackdown on extremism. While the fact that a portion of the money raised may be diverted to militant activity is disturbing, post is also concerned that volunteers from extremist parties have become the face of relief operations in some difficult-to-access parts of AJK. With organized relief efforts reaching into remote areas of the disaster zone, post believes that GOP and international actors will supplant militant organizations as the primary source of assistance, leading to quiet closure of militant relief operations with little negative public reactions.
CROCKER